

REMARKS

The final Office Action dated 26 August 2005 has been reviewed, and the comments of the U.S. Patent Office have been considered. Claims 1, 2, 8-12, and 17-20 were previously canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 13 and 15 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, claims 3, 14, and 16 have been amended, and claims 4-7 remain as originally filed. Thus, claims 3-7, 14, and 16 are respectfully submitted for consideration by the Examiner.

Claims 3-7 and 13-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,474,048 to Yamazaki et al. ("Yamazaki") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,584,278 to Satoh et al. ("Satoh"). These rejections are respectfully traversed in view of the above amendments to claim 3 and the following comments.

Claim 3 recites a system including, *inter alia*, a diaphragm that includes "a central portion engaging the second end of the resilient element; a peripheral portion being fixed with respect to the housing; and an intermediate portion extending between the central and peripheral portions, the intermediate portion including a flexible material relative to the central portion." Applicant's original specification, at paragraph [0023] states that the intermediate portion includes a "relatively flexible material as compared to the central portion."

In contrast, neither Yamazaki, nor Satoh, discloses a diaphragm having an intermediate portion that is more flexible than the central portion. *See* Yamazaki, col. 3, lines 55-67 (disclosing a diaphragm 8 without describing the structure of the diaphragm). *See* Satoh, col. 5, lines 41-53 (disclosing a diaphragm 74 formed of rubber sheet). Neither reference shows or states a central portion that is less flexible than an intermediate portion. For these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) should be withdrawn and claim 3 allowed. Moreover, claims 4-7, 14, and 16 depend from independent claim 3 and are also allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 3, as well as for their additional recited features.

CONCLUSION

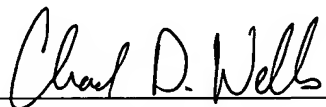
Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner enter this Amendment and Request for Reconsideration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116, thereby placing all pending claims in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner feel that there are any issues outstanding after consideration of this reply, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative to expedite prosecution of the application.

EXCEPT for issue fees payable under 37 C.F.R. § 1.18, the Commissioner is hereby authorized by this paper to charge any additional fees during the entire pendency of this application including fees due under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 which may be required, including any required extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account 08-1641. **This paragraph is intended to be a CONSTRUCTIVE PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a)(3).**

Respectfully submitted,

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